

**MRSA-Patient information** - Information leaflet for patients and visitors

Dear Patient, dear Visitor,

You have just learned that you have an 'MRSA' or that you are an MRSA contact patient. Certain measures must be taken for your safety and that of your environment.

You are probably a bit worried at the moment. We would like to take this opportunity to tell you what an MRSA is and what it means, in order to ease your concern.

**What does MRSA mean?**

MRSA means **methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus***.

To clarify, we will define a few terms:

**Staphylococcus aureus** is a bacteria. It can be present on the skin and/or under the mucus membranes without making you ill. This makes you a 'carrier'. Many healthy adults are permanent or temporary carriers.

Being a carrier does not represent any health problem for you or your loved ones. However, under certain conditions (such as during severe diseases), this can lead to infections in the carrier or people in their vicinity.

During severe infections, treatment with antibiotics is necessary.

**What does methicillin-resistant mean?**

**Methicillin** is an antibiotic. **In this context, resistant** means that the bacteria is not destroyed by this antibiotic.

In the presence of MRSA, therefore, a bacteria of the species *Staphylococcus aureus* is *present* against which the antibiotic *methicillin* no longer has any effect. Usually, this methicillin resistance is associated with resistance to other antibiotics.

In the presence of an infection that requires treatment, therefore, only a few antibiotics are then available for treatment.

Like many other *Staphylococcus aureus* infections, MRSAs can remain on the skin and/or mucus membranes and often disappear on their own without the carrier ever being aware of them.

Outside the hospital setting, you are generally surrounded by healthy people. An MRSA poses no threat to these people. Therefore, no special measures are necessary at home. Only in the presence of very resistance-compromised diseases should you contact your treating physician.

**Why are special measures necessary?**

You probably wonder why such decisive measures are taken that are so inconvenient to you. Here is an explanation.

An MRSA can be present in everyone who comes in contact with the carrier (fellow patients, nursing personnel, physicians, cleaning staff, visitors) on the skin or in the nose. From these populated people, it can be transmitted to others through the hands, during sneezing or coughing, and be distributed throughout the hospital. Due to their basic illness, patients can incur milder or more severe MRSA infections as a result.

This is why the spreading of germs must be prevented as much as possible. Certain measures must be taken at the hospital.

**MRSA-Patient information** - Information leaflet for patients and visitors**What measures must be taken?**

Your accommodation, whether alone or with other MRSA carriers, is decided in each individual case by the treating physician and the hygienist.

To prevent the spread of the pathogen to other people, the nursing staff will explain important procedures regarding hospital hygiene to you, such as the following:

- the technique of hygienic hand disinfection
- handling personal care articles (such as razors, toothbrushes)
- antiseptic full-body washing (including hair washing) 1x daily with an antimicrobial washing lotion, for example with Octenisan washing lotion - see manufacturer's instructions regarding use
- when you should wear mouth and nose protection
- Instead of a roll-on deodorant, please use a spray during this time. To get rid of the bacteria as quickly as possible, please discard the opened roll-on deodorant!
- change the linens daily (clothing, bed linen, utensils of body care, washcloths, towels and the like)
- For direct contact with you, the personnel may wear a protective coat, mouth and nose protection and gloves.
- To destroy the germ on populated skin areas, treatment with an antibiotic or antiseptic, for example in the form of a nasal ointment. The nursing staff or the doctor will explain these measures to you.

After completion of remedial treatment (probably after 5 days), 3 control swabs will be taken on 3 consecutive days from specific skin/mucus membrane sites. These are sent to the laboratory for examination. If there is no longer any MRSA in these swabs, special measures may be ended.

**What is an MRSA contact patient?**

Now, we would like to specifically discuss the term 'MRSA contact patient'.

Being an MRSA contact patient means that you are sharing or have shared a room with an MRSA carrier. It is therefore possible that the pathogen has also populated you. To rule this out - or confirm it - swabs must also be taken from you from certain skin/mucus membrane sites (1x) to be examined for MRSA.

**Dear Visitor,**

Many healthy adults are permanent or temporary MRSA carriers.

We therefore request that you report to the nurse on duty before your visit. They will explain the necessary measures.

You must disinfect your hands hygienically at the beginning and end of your visit.

We hope that this information has been useful to you, answering a few questions and taking away any uncertainty.

The hygiene team of Rostock University Medicine wishes you a speedy recovery or continued health.